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NOTES

ON A WORK ENTITLED

“A NARRATIVE OF FACTS,” &c.

ISSUED BY

NEW ENGLAND

YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

(LARGER BODY,)

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON

THE SEPARATION IN SWANZEY MONTHLY MEETING:
AND ON THE CENSUS.

ALSO, REMARKS ON

A LETTER FROM JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

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AER'M. FISHER.

THO. JOHN,
J. P.

NOTES

ON

“A NARRATIVE OF FACTS.”

PREFATORY REMARKS.

REFLECTING on the state of our religious Society, particularly on the American Continent, and as connected with recent events which have occurred in New England, my mind has been brought under much concern, accompanied by a sincere desire that all my dear friends may seek to know, and to obtain, an abiding establishment on that Rock which followed the Israelites through their wilderness journey, and which Rock the Apostle declared “was Christ;” who, by the operation of his Holy Spirit, drew our forefathers in the Truth, from the—“Lo, here is Christ,” or “Lo, He is there,” to centre to “the Gift of God” in their own hearts.

The Apostle Paul exhorted the primitive believers “not to be soon shaken in mind,”—to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” Being solicitous that this should be the experience of all of us at the present day, I have become willing to cast before my friends the following observations, which were noted for my own use without a view to publication. Having learned that a Separation had taken place in New England Yearly Meeting, and that the *Larger Body* had published “A Narrative of the Facts,” I was much concerned at the occurrence, and procured a copy in the hope that I might obtain a satisfactory account of this effecting event; I had not read many pages before it felt as though it savored more of a party and an intolerant spirit, than of a *living concern for the Truth, in its ancient simplicity*. I perused it a second time with more attention, making notes as I proceeded, which, though somewhat unconnected, I prefer to submit nearly in their original form, rather than to alter materially their first construction. A full Commentary on the “Narrative” would be much more voluminous, and the present may serve as a “Text Book” for those who desire to understand more perfectly the working of this subtle spirit, or to notice further this extraordinary subject.

The following observations, from John Griffith; on Love and Unity, do not seem inapplicable on this occasion:—

“I have observed a prevailing disposition in some of considerable eminence in the Society, and in a great many others, to cry up for peace and

It is desirable that all who have not fully investigated the recent difficulties in New England, would candidly and impartially examine an “Address issued by Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting in 1845,” “John Wilbur’s Narrative and Exposition published in 1845,” “Epistolary Declarations, &c.” “Considerations addressed to the members of the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia, in 1846,” and “An Appeal for the Ancient Doctrine of the Society of Friends,” published by the same Yearly Meeting in 1847.

charity, and the maintenance of *unity*, and not to press any thing very closely, lest the *peace* of the Society should thereby be endangered. What makes me take notice of this, is, that I have seen a great snare in it; wrong things being suffered to remain and prevail under it, and the fire of primitive zeal against undue liberty, much quenched. We have no such examples in the Prophets, or in Christ or his Apostles, of indulging and winking at *wrong* things, and *false ease*. They, in their concern to testify against such things, had no fear of breaking unity, nor of disturbing the *peace* and *quiet* of any people let their rank and station be what it may. Had this noble spirit of ancient zeal been more generally exercised in plain dealing, and speaking the truth one to another, the mournful declension justly complained of amongst us, as a people, would not so generally prevail."

The following short extract, from a late Testimony against Slavery, is so appropriate, that I incline to give it insertion in this place:—

"Some seem to have been restrained from the performance of their duty herein, by the apprehension that the agitation of this question would mar that harmony so desirable among brethren of the same religious faith."

"That is but a mere outward harmony, worse than valueless, false and delusive in its character, which is gained by the sacrifice of principle."

ADDRESS.

The following Notes having been written before the London Yearly Meeting of 1846, a short notice of a few matters which have recently occurred may assist in elucidating the subject.

The Yearly Meeting of Ireland have done well in not responding to the Epistle from the *Larger Body* of Friends in New England; but having so far abstained from giving encouragement to those who have violated the right order of the Discipline, it would have been well had they also declined to *record* their epistle. Whilst so far giving the meed of approbation to the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, my "heart is pained, and my spirit is stirred within me," when I consider that the Yearly Meeting in London have continued their connection with the *Larger Body*, and are thus encouraging those amongst them who have so signally set themselves against "the Truth;" not sufficiently attending, it is to be feared, to the apostolic exhortation, to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good:" and to "avoid all appearance of evil;" and this, notwithstanding the encouraging example of Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings, which have made a noble stand, by neither *recording* nor *answering* the New England epistle from the *Larger Body*, nor recording certificates or minutes for Ministers from that body, several of whom attended those meetings. Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings have also in their Epistle to the Meeting for Sufferings in London, maintained the ancient Testimonies of the Society. They complain of "the publication by Friends, of books containing doctrines *not* in accordance with our original principles—that such were produced by Friends in *high* stations,—that it had produced a *dividing* spirit in the Society,—that this change arose from a desire to assimilate to the world,—and that those who had their *spiritual* eyes anointed can see the difference,—that this difference of views must divide until this unsoundness is testified against, and that *no peace* could be ours by *closing* our eyes to *the danger*." "Mark them that *cause* divisions and offences *contrary* to the doctrine which ye have learned, and *avoid* them." If any one will not maintain the principles of the Society, a more honorable course is to leave it.

What objection ought there to be on the part of the Yearly Meeting of London, and that of Dublin, to receive the Epistles from, and unite with, the *Smaller* Yearly Meeting in New England? They have done *similarly* before as regards the Yearly Meetings of New York and Baltimore, where the connection was, and is, with the *smaller number*; i. e. with those who had to withdraw from their former meeting-houses, and from the *larger* and more powerful bodies, in order to sustain their meetings and the principles of the Society; they meeting elsewhere as the *Smaller Body* in New England have done. And why did London and Dublin unite with the *smaller* Yearly Meetings in New York and Baltimore, on the Hicksite separation, and reject the Epistle signed by the former Clerk, as did also Philadelphia, but because they held to sound doctrines, in accordance with our "*Early Friends*?" And who will affirm that this is not the case in New England now? It has been said that the *Smaller Body* have "not acted with discretion,"—"that they have damaged a good cause." Are these sufficient grounds (even if true) for withholding from them "the right-hand of fellowship," and not acknowledging the *soundness* of their *principles*?

Is it not evident, from the attempts to disparage the *Smaller* Yearly Meeting, (even bordering on, if not amounting to, untruthful representations,) that the *Larger* fear for their own standing, and the effect of their former acts; and that they have resorted to this means in order to depreciate the *Smaller*, to deter others from uniting with them? In their Epistle to London they stated "that they had been brought into trial in consequence of a number having become '*disaffected* to the Society;' with whom others having joined, they had seceded from the body, and set up what they called a Yearly Meeting." This does not appear correct—it *does not* appear that the *Smaller Body* have become "*disaffected* to the Society,"—but, that they hold to the doctrines of "our early Friends;" and that it was for conscientious and religious adherence to these, that they were ejected by the *Larger Body*. A Minister, who was present at the time, has acknowledged, that it could not be said, "there was any thing disorderly in the manner of the separation of the *Smaller Body*." If the *Larger* complain hereof, they condemn themselves; they having separated from Swanzey Monthly Meeting in a similar manner, only, with *disorder*. From the account we have of the late Yearly Meeting, "they appear to be restive under the decision of last year," which "is of so doubtful a nature in a legal point of view, *touching the property of the Society*," "and so *ill-adapted* withal to the public scrutiny, that they seem desirous of doing something that will exhibit a better appearance of fair proceedings." On the other hand, we learn that "The attendance of the *Smaller Body* was nearly double that of last year; and that the meeting was truly a solid and instructive one. Those most sensible of their weakness as a little remnant, were encouraged and strengthened by seeing so many gathering to their standard, and the evidence of the owning of the Shepherd of Israel being so prevalent; whereby the mourners in Zion were comforted in a hope that, if faithfulness and watchfulness are the abiding concern of those who have thus escaped the deluge of the present relaxation from *first* principles, the Church will again increase, and shine forth in her pristine purity and comeliness."

Unity is good and precious when maintained on the right foundation; but it cannot be right to maintain its *appearance* at the sacrifice of *principle*. Do consistent Christians maintain *unity* with Slaveholders? Did our Early Friends continue to maintain *unity* with the Church of England, or with other professors from whom they dissented? No more should consistent Quakers now continue to hold *unity* with those who *dissent* from the *ancient principles* of Friends, as laid down by Fox, Penn, Barclay, and others.

Where are those now-a-days who have the moral and religious courage to speak out boldly ; to proclaim, as upon the house-tops, what they heard in the secret of the heart—not in an unsanctified zeal, but in the *power of Truth*, dwelling with and in “*the seed*”—letting no fleshly cogitation or fear of man, obstruct their faithfulness to the Divine Light ? Isaiah declared —“ For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.”—Chap. lxii. 1. The prophet Amos declared,—“ Woe to them that are *at ease in Zion*, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came.”—Chap. vi. 1. How many are there who like dwelling in *the quiet*, who wish “ not to disturb the state of Society,” when the command has gone forth,—“ Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”

It may be feared that Friends of Ireland will come under censure, “ because [on an important occasion] they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” Not one of them present in the late yearly meeting in London (1846) lifted up his voice in the cause of the ancient principles of Truth as professed by our “early Friends;” thus appearing tacitly to coincide with that meeting in consorting with the *larger body* in New England, and thereby becoming assenting parties to its acts of intolerance. Could their worthy and zealous predecessors “*in the Truth*” believe that their successors would be so supine when there seemed some danger of the Society gradually sliding back into Episcopacy ?

Friends! will any of you imagine that “ I am therefore become your enemy because I tell you the Truth ?”

If there be any amongst us impatient under the chastening preparing hand of the Lord, not willing to abide the whole of the appointed time, and travel as through the wilderness journey, but who are become desirous to return to Egypt, let them return themselves, but not endeavor to take back the people with them into bondage. If all were abiding free from the teachings or influence of man, in an humble, faithful obedience to the discoveries of “ the Light of Christ ” in the soul, there would be no retrograde tendency ; for having begun in the Spirit, there could be no desire to be “ made perfect by the flesh.” And earnestly desiring that this may be the happy experience of every individual amongst us for the future, and that the time past may suffice, I take my leave under a feeling of much love and deep interest, that the Society may be renewedly built up a spiritual house, to offer spiritual sacrifices unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

BRIEF NOTICES

RELATIVE TO “ A NARRATIVE OF FACTS.”

Page 3. How desirable it is that Friends should avoid harsh and severe expressions, or ascribe improper motives to others, as if theirs were the only accounts to be relied on, such as—“ those who are liable to be deceived by *unfounded* and *improper* representations.”

Page 4.—Had the Meeting for Sufferings of New England any proper jurisdiction in the case ? Or any right to make such an appointment ? The publication was by an English Friend to whom the ‘ Letters ’ were addressed ; and was issued from the press *before* John Wilbur received his returning certificate of *unity* from the Meeting of Ministers and Elders in

London. Was it not the duty of Friends in Old England to take cognizance of any actions of John Wilbur, in that country, which might appear to require the notice of the Society?

Page 5.—Assertions of “detraction” are *not proof*. When or where was it done? What were the expressions? Where, and when were the letters written, with a *view* to *injure* the religious character of *divers Friends*? And instead of being ready to make charges without bringing proof, (as it is admitted that J. Wilbur acted under the “profession of *supporting sound doctrine*,”) would it not have been the right course, if any *action* had been taken against him, to have shewn him that *his doctrine was wrong*, (if this could be done) rather than avoid giving attention to what was the *true cause* of the uneasiness and concern of John Wilbur? For, if wrong doctrine be printed or preached by any, however high their standing, is it not a Christian duty to caution others to avoid it? And is not this, also, “in the line of religious duty?” And, although much labour was bestowed on J. Wilbur to persuade him to desist from what is termed an “unwarrantable course,” yet it does not appear that a single effort was used to convince him that *the ground of his uneasiness was unfounded*; but from the systematic avoidance of this, it gives reason to apprehend that those who wanted to preserve *the appearance of unity*, were fearful that they could not stand on that ground.

Page 6 and 7.—The same remarks apply to the report of the opportunity had with him by “a Minister and aged Elder,” who conversed with *divers* of his own Meeting respecting J. W., in disapprobation of his conduct. A real cause of detraction on their part, by their own shewing.

Page 7.—In the letter written on behalf of the Select Yearly Meeting’s Committee, the same evasion of the ground of uneasiness is adhered to; and, although J. W. had before readily given an opportunity to those who wished to see him, and that in this letter it is said, “his not coming at the time appointed may have been occasioned by reasonable causes;” yet none being given it has the appearance of design, as if to create an unfavorable feeling against him for his non-appearance.

Page 9.—The Committee from Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders pursued the same course, avoiding the cause of uneasiness; and when the Committee was appointed it does *not* appear that there were deficiencies in the answers to the queries from South Kingston Monthly Meeting, requiring their interference.

Page 11.—J. W. may, or may not, have been incautious in opening his mind so plainly, yet no attempt is made to convince him that he was *wrong* in his apprehension of the spread of unsound views; and by the letter from the companion of the Minister, it would seem as if they favored the line of conversation, or possibly occasioned it by their enquiries of his opinion respecting individuals. How far it was correct (*page 12*) to publish this private, and, no doubt, confidential conversation, remains to be shewn.

Page 13.—The letter here complained of is not given, and although it is said that J. W. considered the Committee were “themselves upholding doctrines which were unsound,” yet no attempt was made to refute it.

Page 14 and 15.—The Committee have gone too far in concluding that no Friend could be brought to account, after having received a Certificate to travel, for any thing that had occurred previously. A Friend might be guilty before, and circumstances not be known to his meeting; or the Meeting he belonged to might be partial or very much under his controlling influence. Suppose that Elias Hicks, before his case was fully made public, had obtained a Certificate to travel, would Friends, who knew or detected his unsoundness, be under the necessity of receiving him as a Minister in

unity, because he might shelter himself (*page 18, 19*) under the plea of his Certificate, and refuse to give satisfaction? In the present case, it was well known that the Certificate was *not* granted unanimously by London Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders; many solid Friends, both Ministers and Elders, declaring themselves *not satisfied* therewith.

A circumstance had also occurred, which it is believed, few in the Meeting were acquainted with. "The Friend from England had sometime before submitted, or rather presented, to the Morning Meeting a tract entitled "Brief Remarks," &c., which that Meeting had *rejected*. This tract he got *printed*, but afterwards, it is understood, he endeavored to shelter himself under the plea, that it was *not published*; yet many copies found their way to America (some in manuscript) after he had received his certificate, for which, according to the Committee's admission, he should have been amenable there. Although J. W. took an early opportunity with him, respecting it, he obtained no satisfaction.

Page 16.—Unless J. W. felt that he could conscientiously sign the paper, he acted consistently in declining to do so. It appears rather extraordinary that so large a Committee as *twenty-seven* should have been appointed on *this* case, unless it were to intimidate by numbers; nothing having been shewn *here* that they had any thing else to do. He considered himself on *right grounds* when he so clearly stated that he had "no concessions to make."

Page 18 to 20.—Notwithstanding the note at page 20, it appears an extraordinary proceeding for a Committee of the Yearly Meeting, whose appointment was for the "*preservation of Love and Unity*," and to *assist and advise* such Meetings and Members "as circumstances may require, and *way open for*," to supercede Overseers, and bring individuals under dealing for which no express authority was given to them.

Pages 21 and 22.—There also appears something extraordinary in the conducting of the Discipline by this Committee,—their readiness to make charges and impute motives, which would be unnecessary were they conscious that they were *themselves* acting on *right grounds*—from *pure* motives—and having nothing in view but *the cause of Truth*. The complaint irregularly introduced by them to the Monthly Meeting, and *their presence* there appears to have been the occasion of much disorder. At this Monthly Meeting "four Friends were appointed to visit John Wilbur." At the following Meeting five more were added, which, they say, was "an irregular step." In this they must be wrong. Is it not perfectly regular, and frequently practised, to add to the number on Committees? It is so in this country. They then give, as their belief, "that all of them were very much under his influence." For a Yearly Meeting, or its Committee, to descend to such insinuations to screen their own irregular movements deserves notice. The Committee proceed to state that it was "their usual time for the appointment of a clerk," but that "the Representatives could not agree upon a name." Where, then, did the appointment rest? Surely in the Meeting. "Those in favor of sustaining the order of Society, proposed that the subject should be deferred one month," but some member of the Monthly Meeting proposed "another person as Clerk." They say that "much tumult and disorder ensued," but they do not tell us what part themselves took in promoting it; yet from their objecting to the Friend proposed it may be inferred that they were the chief promoters thereof. They next complain that the Clerk withdrew from the table. The seat being vacant, the Friend proposed took his seat at the table, (at the request of the meeting,) and made the usual minute of appointment, of which the Committee also complain. Surely this Committee could not have been ignorant that this is often

done, and probably has been done in their own Meeting. Must it not always be done whenever a former Clerk is continued? And if the former Clerk in this Monthly Meeting had not vacated his seat, must he not have made a minute of his own re-appointment, if it happened that he was continued? But it would appear that he had more sense of propriety than longer to push for office against the judgment of the Meeting. "Thus," they say, "was a person placed at the table in an irregular manner, and contrary to the judgment of many well-concerned and consistent Friends." Were not *they* irregular? They proceed to complain that the name of a Friend proposed to be added to the Committee to visit J. Wilbur was not taken down, because the Meeting was informed that he would not be acceptable to J. W. So they first complain that an addition *was made* to the Committee, and they then complain because a further addition *was not made*! Was not the reason given a proper one, and the concession reasonable for any Monthly Meeting to make to a person under-dealing, instead of being a matter of grave complaint by the Yearly Meeting? Besides, their own discipline allows to one accused of detraction, (as was J. W.) such *right* of objection. They do not inform us under what influence the first four Friends were appointed to visit J. Wilbur; whilst they complain of the other five. So that it may be supposed they had four of the Friends, and the Monthly Meeting five, appointed.

In the following month, the Committee of the Yearly Meeting (present *twenty-three* in number) advised the former Clerk, whose appointment *had expired*, and who had *vacated* his seat, "*not to give up the books and papers of South Kingston Monthly Meeting*" Did any Friend ever hear of such improper advice on behalf of a Yearly Meeting in the conducting of the discipline? This Committee again attended the Monthly Meeting in 6th month, 1842, and from their minutes give the following information:—"That they had at the previous Monthly Meeting displaced the Clerk in an unusual and abrupt manner." From their own previous account this appears to be a great misrepresentation, if it be *not untrue*; his appointment had expired, and he had left the table. The Committee "advised the Meeting to reinstate the former Clerk,"—the man who "would not give up the books and papers!" And this advice, they say, was "with a view to the promotion of *unity* and harmony amongst them." A strange way to effect it! They add, "this advice and proposal *a considerable* number of the *Members* objected to, and refused to comply with, and manifested great disrespect towards the Committee." This is only assertion; but did they do any act likely to gain respect? They proceed, again, to notice the addition of five to the Committee appointed in 4th month, which they say, "with its attendant unjustifiable circumstances was cause of regret to the rightly concerned Members of the Meeting,"—(*i. e.* to the few who took part with themselves.) And they add, "we think it evidently calculated to embarrass, if not entirely defeat, any just decision in the case,"—(that was according to their *prejudiced* opinions; the Meeting not being willing to be blindly led and governed by them.) The Committee thus early anticipated "even an open revolt," for which they seemed preparing.

Page 23. In the 7th month, "Six of the Yearly Meeting's Committee met those appointed by South Kingston Monthly Meeting in the case of J. Wilbur, and proceeded to lay before them full documentary evidence to establish each point contained in the communication addressed to the Monthly Meeting against him." This Committee of the Yearly Meeting, who had preferred the complaint, now assumed to sit with the Committee of the Monthly Meeting, as *accusers* and *judges*, though they do not state that they were appointed by the Monthly Meeting to sit with, or to assist their Com-

mittee; nor could they consistently be so appointed, for *they* were the *accusers*; but, like inquisitors, they seemed to consider themselves entitled to slip into any place they pleased, and to influence all according to their will; for, when the Monthly Meeting's Committee allowed J. Wilbur more liberty in his defence than *they chose*, they "declined remaining any longer present with the Committee," and thus made an exit on as inconsistent and irregular grounds, as they had made their entry!

Page 24.—On the 25th of 7th month, several of the Yearly Meeting's Committee attended South Kingston Monthly Meeting, and complained of "those who were attempting to control the proceedings of the meeting." It would appear that it was *themselves* who were *attempting to do this*, and to overturn the right order of the discipline, reiterating the misrepresentation, that the Clerk "was irregularly and improperly appointed;" whereas the time for which the former Clerk was appointed had expired, he had vacated his seat, and the meeting had named another. Was not this according to order?—The appointment a judicious one, and the Friend qualified to fill the office? If not, these disciplinarians would have been as loud in their complaints on this head, as they were unjust in that of irregularity. Their remark as to a general want of qualification "to conduct the affairs of the Church," and "being apparently deficient in a religious sense of the weight and importance of the work," is not very charitable, nor does it seem to be a fair description of the meeting. "Who made thee a ruler and a judge of thy brethren in these things?" The Committee remark on a "want of love and unity." There does not appear to have been exceptions to either, in the answers to the queries, previously to the Committee having stirred up dissent amongst them; nor any insubordination except in objecting to be governed by the despotic diction of this Committee.

Page 25.—"On the 22nd of 8th month, 1842, a number of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, in conjunction with the Committee of the Quarterly Meeting, again attended South Kingston Monthly Meeting." We are informed, on a former occasion, that twenty-three of the Committee of the Yearly Meeting were present. We may infer that not fewer would be there at this time, since it is understood that all the Members of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee attended; and it will not be difficult to form an idea of the magnitude of the body present for the purpose of coercing this "insubordinate meeting" to comply with the mandates which themselves had required to be obeyed. When the opening minute and the minute of the Quarterly Meeting were read, "a report from the Committee in John Wilbur's case was called for, which was immediately presented and read." It was signed by *seven* of the nine friends, who stated in substance, that they had heard the Yearly Meeting's Committee and John Wilbur, and were of the judgment that the evidence adduced *did not* support the charges; and ended in recommending the dismissal of the complaint against him.

This complaint had been made to the Monthly Meeting by the Committee of the Yearly Meeting, and hence the appointment to visit him; but finding that all was not going on as the Committee desired, without waiting for the report of the Committee appointed by the Monthly Meeting, what do they do but complain to the Quarterly Meeting; may it not be concluded, without any breach of charity, for the purpose of increasing their number, and of coercing the Monthly Meeting, to act as they please? But to continue,—The Committee of the Yearly Meeting proceed to state, that "a report was also presented, signed (*page 26*) by *two* of the Committee stating, substantially, that they considered all the charges fully verified," &c., which, "for a considerable time, was refused to be read." Aye, and very properly refused!

Ought not the report of the Committee signed by the *seven* to have been taken in preference to that of the *two*?—especially as it was brought in after all the evidence of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, in support of the complaint submitted by them to the meeting, had been patiently heard and solidly considered by the *nine*. But doubtless the *two* were well aware of being supported by the Yearly and the Quarterly Meetings' Committees, whose object was evidently that of *disowning* John Wilbur; a course which they advocated by objecting to the report of the *seven*, knowing that he would "thereby be left a member" of the Society. These Committees moreover advised against him, and in a very unhandsome manner insinuated that those in favour "were nearly all of them John Wilbur's near relatives," meaning that they were guilty of partiality and of subversion of the right exercise of our Christian Discipline; whereas facts subsequently proved that *eighty-two* signed an appeal in favor of J. W., and but one individual of South Kingston "Monthly Meeting spoke decidedly against it."

Is it not considered that an accused party should be tenderly dealt with, and have the benefit of any doubtful point? In this case by far the greater number united in acquitting him; yet these Committees *demand* the disownment. The Meeting was "aware of the authority of the Quarterly Meeting to give them advice, but as the Monthly Meeting had a right to act independently according to its own judgment, they might receive or reject it as they thought proper. If they had no independence of action, it was not advice but a mere mandate."

Page 27.—The report of the seven Friends was accepted by the Monthly Meeting, which step the Committee of the Yearly Meeting declared to be "contrary to the expressed sense and judgment of divers well-concerned and consistent members of that meeting." How often does it occur, or rather, when does it not occur, that all do not see alike? If such was to reverse or alter the decision of a meeting, "the Friend from England" would not have gone to America, as it is notorious that some of the most qualified Friends at the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders in London, "expressed their sense and judgment against it." Having recourse to such reasoning shows more clearly the determination of this Committee to carry their measure, as the event will prove.

The Quarterly Meeting's Committee again attended the Monthly Meeting in 10th month, to which they presented a written communication, requiring the dismissal of their clerk, Samuel Sheffield, and the reappointment of the former one, Timothy Collins, (who, it may be recollected, had vacated his seat at the table) and advising him to continue "to retain the records of that Meeting," and that the decision in J. Wilbur's case "be now set aside and be made void and of no effect." Was ever such advice known before? which, the Committee say, the Meeting was "by the provisions of the discipline *bound* to receive." Can it be possible that there is in the discipline of New England Yearly Meeting such a rule? *taking away* from Monthly Meetings all *power of acting*, and placing the whole of the discipline at the dictum of whatever Committee a Quarterly Meeting may appoint; this cannot be credited in *this* free country; but if there be such a rule, then may we say, save us in Old England from such unwarrantable assumption.

Let us hear more of American discipline. In the following month (the 11th), the Committee reported to the Quarterly Meeting, that they "endeavored to labour, we trust in a spirit of love, for the preservation of right order." (Was it not rather for its perversion?) After some further remarks they add, "The following communication (*page 29*) was prepared and presented at their last meeting, viz. [cited above] "this communication was read in the meeting and directed to be recorded, and its further consideration

referred to their *next* meeting." What more reasonable or consistent disposal could be made of it? But this Quarterly Meeting's Committee being bent upon their favourite measure, would not allow time. The thing must be done at once! They therefore went on to state, "From what has been witnessed by the Committee, and from authentic information derived from *others*."—(Another new feature in discipline!) So a Committee appointed by a Quarterly Meeting is to apply to individuals, and to try and obtain what they may be pleased to call "authentic information," when what occurs *in* the Monthly Meeting may not be sufficient to carry their purpose!

The Committee of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, assisted by the Committee of the Yearly Meeting, after furnishing themselves with all this "authentic information derived *from others*," came to the judgment "that South Kingston Monthly Meeting *be dissolved*." Their report was "fully united with" by the Quarterly Meeting; and the Monthly Meeting of South Kingston was dissolved instanter!! Was the like ever heard before? Can it require any comment!! Does not this shew the evil of looking intensely at any object, without looking to Him who "is a spirit of judgment to those who sit in judgment," humbly and diligently seeking for His assistance? But is it not sorrowful to see those who profess to depend on the Heavenly Gift, so hasty in their tempers as not to be willing to wait even a single month for the due consideration of their own counsel! Every thing that the Committee recommended *must* be done *at once*, or their displeasure is heavily laid on those who disobey! The monthly meeting must therefore "be dissolved,"—and "*dissolved*" it was! It seems that they proceeded to give verbal information to the Quarterly Meeting, and that this body acted fully up to all the desire of their Committee; for, after dissolving the Monthly Meeting, the minute annuls the proceedings thereof (*page 30*) respecting T. C. Collins not giving up the Records; also "the report of a *part* of the Committee in his (John Wilbur's) case," (this *part* was *seven* of the *nine* Friends appointed)—all these are "annulled and declared void," because they were "made *against* the direct *advice* of the *Quarterly Meeting's Committee!*" But "all *OTHER* unfinished business *NOW* before *THAT* Meeting, is directed to be transferred to Greenwich Monthly Meeting."

And, as if these proceedings had raised some apprehensions of the consequences of their arbitrary conduct, the Committee, after having a copy of the minute of dissolution read, had "to request those assembled *quietly* to separate!" When this minute was read in the Monthly Meeting, it is said that "all those who were in unity with the said meeting" (meaning themselves) "quietly withdrew," "when the others remained together and came to the conclusion to appeal to the Quarterly Meeting."

Page 31.—But what occurs at Greenwich Monthly Meeting, to which the Quarterly Meeting attached South Kingston? They find "that a Committee was appointed in 4th month last in the case of J. Wilbur;" "said Committee are *now* requested to report to *this* meeting." Here is an extraordinary stretch of power, or rather of acting without *any* legitimate power or authority. The minute of the Quarterly Meeting annulled part of the proceedings in the case of J. Wilbur, and ordered "that *all other* unfinished business *now* before that meeting is directed to be transferred to the Greenwich Monthly Meeting." There was no *unfinished business* relating to J. Wilbur before the Monthly Meeting of South Kingston; and therefore nothing whatever that Greenwich Monthly Meeting could consistently "take action" upon, against him. Notwithstanding which, "the following *action* was taken in the case at their next Monthly Meeting." And what *action* (*page 32*) can be supposed, but the disownment of John Wilbur on the

report from *two* of the Committee, who, it does not appear, ever visited him on behalf of Greenwich Monthly Meeting, nor were required so to do. It was a *report to take action on*, they wanted, and this the *two* out of the *nine* readily furnished; and they *took action* thereon *AT ONCE to disownment!* Can it be necessary to remark further hereupon to convince every unprejudiced reader of this *perversion* of all right discipline?

Page 33.—Against this judgment John Wilbur appealed to the Quarterly Meeting, and they of course confirmed their own proceedings. The Yearly Meeting did the same, as was to be expected; it being *their* Committee who first took action in the case, and brought the complaint before the Monthly Meeting!

An appeal was also presented to the Quarterly Meeting against the dissolution of South Kingston Monthly Meeting. The report of the Committee on this appeal was signed by thirteen out of the twenty-one, composing it; and yet the Yearly Meeting confirmed the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting.

It thus appears, as was plainly shown by the Yearly Meeting of New England in *their* "Narrative of Facts," that John Wilbur *was cleared* by his own *Monthly Meeting* of the charges preferred against him, and was *NOT disowned* in accordance with the discipline of our Religious Society; that the Monthly Meeting of Greenwich had *no authority* for action in the case; and, therefore, *John Wilbur is still virtually a Member of our Religious Society, and ought to be regarded as such.*

THE SEPARATION IN SWANZEY MONTHLY MEETING.

After having read the "Narrative of Facts," and made the foregoing memoranda, I read "An Address from Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting," and particularly observed its similarity of views with those I had written in my Notes. And, although the circumstances occasioning the separation in Swanzev Meeting are different from those already stated respecting South Kingston, yet as they show the working of the same spirit, a brief notice of them may have a confirmatory effect. Passing over the preliminary occurrences, it appears that a Committee was appointed by Swanzev Monthly Meeting, "to bring before the Meeting the names of persons suitable for Overseers." A Friend being proposed who had an *unsettled* difference between himself and another, was objected to. One of the Committee afterwards mentioned to a colleague of the Committee, in confidence, an additional reason why *he* could not approve of the Friend proposed as Overseer, on which he had previously taken an opportunity with him, but had obtained no satisfaction. This confidence was betrayed. The matter was reported to the Friend. The Overseers paid some attention to it. The individual who made the objection "offered to meet, according to the discipline, with two or three friends, and leave it for them to decide, whether he was justified in making the remark he did." In place of acceding to this consistent offer, the case was carried to the Monthly Meeting, which appointed a Committee to assist the overseers therein!

Subsequently a Committee was appointed respecting Clerks, and also Overseers; but not agreeing upon names to propose, the Committee from the Yearly Meeting, which visited South Kingston Monthly Meeting, took upon itself the responsibility of recommending, in rather a long written report, the name of the Friend who had been objected to in the Committee of the Monthly Meeting; and *two* out of *seven* of the Monthly Meeting's Committee made a written report proposing names for Overseers; among the number was, the name of said Friend, and which circumstance prevented the

Meeting from adopting the report. At a subsequent Monthly Meeting several strangers attended, and without producing any minute of appointment, one of them stated that "the Yearly Meeting's Committee had laid before the Quarterly Meeting the written advice which they had presented to the last Meeting, and that the Quarterly Meeting approved of it, and ordered it to be placed on record." This advice was to force upon the meeting an individual as Overseer, to whom objection had been made for the following reasons, viz :—

1st.—Because there was an unsettled difference between him and another Friend.

2nd.—Because he declined meeting the Friend whom he charged with detraction, before two or three others, agreeably to the order of the discipline.

3rd.—Because he allowed a complaint thereof to be carried to the Monthly Meeting without first giving gospel order.

4th.—Because when a Committee was appointed by the Monthly Meeting to assist the Overseers, he did not attend their sitting.

The Friend of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, after some further statements made, proposed that *the Clerk* should leave the table, and named another individual to take his seat as *Clerk of the Meeting!* Some approved of this strange manœuvre, whilst others objected to it, stating that the person proposed had acted in that capacity a few years previously but had *not* given general satisfaction. After the meeting had been opened in due course (the regular clerk in his place), and the usual minute made, this Yearly Meeting-man requested the Friend he had proposed to walk up to the table, which he did, accompanied by two other strangers, one of them pushing him forward by the arm! Whence his reluctance to move? Was it from extraordinary diffidence or from consciousness of disorderly procedure? Not finding room at the table, this same Yearly Meeting-man ordered his friend to take another seat, with which he complied, and soon began writing and reading to the annoyance of the meeting. They, however, with their supporters, shortly adjourned, and the meeting conducted its business in quietness and good order. Thus a separation was effected by the very individuals who claimed to be acting under the authority of New England Yearly Meeting. Friends! who are the *real seceders* think you? Here was a separation produced without the delay consequent upon a report to the Quarterly Meeting, and the subsequent dissolution of South Kingston Monthly Meeting! A strange procedure, truly, from a Committee claiming to act by authority of a Yearly Meeting! It is to be hoped that the discipline, as well as the *true liberty* and order of "the Truth" are better understood in *this* country than that any sanction should be given to such irregular and arbitrary proceedings.

Since it appears that the *Larger Body* in New England are "the Seceders" (in this instance at least), both in doctrine and practice, the recognition, by other Yearly Meetings, of either the *Larger* or the *Smaller Body*, should be governed, not by numbers but by consistent adherence to, and faithful maintenance of, our ancient Christian Testimonies, Principles, and Discipline. "Brethren and Sisters look to yourselves, lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble you."

THE CENSUS.

The Census of New England Yearly Meeting, as taken by their direction or by that of their Meeting for Sufferings, and published in "the London Friend," without any note of disapprobation, is another indication of the

spread of unsound principles from America. What is this taken or published for, but with the view of casting discredit on the *Smaller* number?—which proceeding is at variance with the principles of our Early Friends as laid down by Robert Barclay. It has not always been the case that the *Larger* number have preserved the purest Faith, as particularly appears in the Hicksite Separation in New York and in Baltimore Yearly Meetings, and in many subordinate meetings in America. The Yearly Meeting of London then continued its connexion and correspondence with the *Smaller* numbers; and why not now follow the same course, by examining into and ascertaining which of those bodies assuming the title of “New England Yearly Meeting,” maintains the ancient fundamental principles of our Religious Society as promulgated and laid down by Fox, Barclay, Penn, and others; and to unite with them regardless of numbers? Can any that dissent from *their* principles be, consistently considered, *their* successors in “the Truth?”

REMARKS

ON THE “LETTER FROM JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.”

See “*The [London] Friend*” for 1st month, 1846.

The reading of this letter produced surprise; and this has not been lessened on further perusal. It requires the eye to be opened by the “*Light of Christ*,” and the ear to be unstopped by *His power*, to enable us to discern the wiles of the unwearied adversary in his various and refined assaults. The letter states, that John Wilbur, “in consequence of his setting at defiance the good order established amongst us, has been separated from the Society by *his* Monthly Meeting.” This is worded in a way to make a *wrong* impression on those unacquainted with “the Facts;” which, having been noticed in the foregoing part of this publication, do not require to be repeated; and it does not appear that he did “set at defiance the good order established amongst us.”

J. J. Gurney afterwards says, “if any Friend of *weight* and consistency will furnish me, in writing, with such passages from my works as he or she may consider unsatisfactory (*duly signed* of course), although I believe there is *nothing* in my writings at variance with the Truth as it has been *always* professed by *Friends*, yet I should consider it my duty to take an early opportunity of laying such communication before the Morning Meeting in London; the body which, according to our wholesome system of discipline, is constitutionally authorized to judge of such matters.”

Surely J. J. G. cannot be ignorant that this was in substance the course pursued by John Wilbur, who first gave him “*Gospel order*,” by taking a private opportunity with him; and, in the spirit of love to himself and the cause of Truth, frankly opening before him the just cause of uneasiness arising out of the unsound doctrines contained in his writings. When, in place of any acknowledgment or concession, he entered into self-justification and defence of them. This private labour not “restoring his brother,” John Wilbur furnished to the Meeting for Sufferings in New England, such passages from the writings of J. J. Gurney as he “considered unsatisfactory,” and “at variance with the Truth as it has been *always* professed by *Friends*.” He referred them to this meeting as “the body which, according to our wholesome system of discipline, is constitutionally authorized to judge of such matters.” Is not this the very course proposed by Joseph John Gurney? Whether these extracts were “*duly signed*,” in the presence of proper witnesses, does not appear; nor whether any objection

was made on this ground ; but the Meeting for Sufferings declined to enquire " whether these things were so."

A Committee was, however, sent down by the Yearly Meeting, who assumed extraordinary powers. They made a complaint in writing to the Monthly Meeting against John Wilbur for "*detraction*," and they succeeded in dissolving "*his* Monthly Meeting ;" and, afterwards in disowning *him*, rather than *investigating* the cause of his *disapproval* of the *writings* of J. J. Gurney, as I have already shown. Of all these proceedings, and of the several steps by which the final issue has been accomplished, we are to conclude, from his letter, that J. J. Gurney approves of the line of discipline pursued.* Will it be said that this dealing was for "*detraction*?" I ask, would not a Friend in this country, proceeding as J. J. Gurney invites, be brought into similar circumstances? J. W. makes complaint of the unsoundness of a Friend in the Ministry, from the *doctrines* which that Minister has published in print far and near. To strengthen this complaint by the evidence and opinions of others, he writes to and holds conversations with, some of his friends. I ask, would any prudent person, engaged in so important a concern, dare to take the responsibility of acting otherwise? Yet, has not every one, who may feel so disposed, as much liberty to speak, and write, and print his views respecting the works of any author, as that author had to print them? Surely every work issued from the press becomes public property, to be judged of according to its merits by any and by all!

As a parallel with New England, let us suppose that a certain complaint is made to " the Morning Meeting in London;" which body, instead of investigating the merits of the case, tortures it into "*Detraction*" against the complainant; and his monthly meeting, (Devonshire-house, for instance,) thinks proper to deal with it. They appoint a Committee of nine individuals to visit the offending Friend, seven of whom bring in a report of clearance, because after close scrutiny into the matter, they believe that the charge against him is by no means sustained; therefore they dismiss the case. In time the Yearly and the Quarterly Meetings to which the Monthly belongs, appoint Committees to visit it on this behalf; these Committees make report of dissatisfaction to the Quarterly Meeting, which, without hesitation, and by a few strokes of the pen, instantly dissolves the respectable and long-established Monthly Meeting of Devonshire-house; joining the Friends constituting it to that of Gracechurch-street, whether agreeable to either party or not. This done, on a report of the two appointed by Devonshire-house, who could not unite with their seven colleagues in the former report, Gracechurch-street Monthly Meeting now resumes the dismissed case, and, without paying the complainant a visit on its behalf, sets to and disowns him—a valuable Minister—from membership with us as a Religious Society!!! Would not Joseph John Gurney or any other compassionate, reflecting Friend exclaim—" Impossible that such perversion of the discipline could be practiced in this land?" Yet such has been done in America!

But what is to prevent the like occurring here, if there happen to be as many determined men in London Yearly Meeting *regardless of due order, right discipline, and justice*, as there were in New England yearly meeting? It may be said that J. J. Gurney was not present, and that those proceedings should not be charged on him. There is, however, no reason to doubt that *his writings* stirred up and occasioned much, if not all, this confusion and sorrow of heart! And has there not already been some indication of a beginning, in this country, to act upon the American principle, by the proposal in

*We cannot suppose but that he has read the "Narrative of New England Yearly Meeting," and is well acquainted with all "the Facts."

the Morning Meeting held in London a little before the Yearly Meeting, 1846, to appoint a Committee based somewhat upon the model of the New England Committee! Though the proposal was indorsed, yet it failed of success, and was to have been tried again at a more convenient season!

Dear Friends, be on your guard; "be strong, watch you, and quit you like men;" and even if the wedge has entered, let not those be found amongst us to drive it to the American result.

J. J. Gurney proposed as a *duty* to lay "such communication before the Morning Meeting in London,"—to take with him the *accusations* against himself or his *writings*,—in fine to be his *own accuser*, and his *own justifier*,—and the Friend making the selection from his writings, and preferring the complaints, is not supposed to be present, for he may not be a member of that Meeting: though probably J. J. Gurney would not consider any Friend of sufficient "*weight and consistency*" who was *not* a member of "the Morning Meeting in London." Who is to be the judge whether the Friend have this *first-named* qualification, viz. "*weight and consistency*?" It is concluded that J. J. Gurney would claim this privilege to himself, and therefore have the opportunity of rejecting every attempt that was likely to prove over troublesome to him. If Friends of the Meeting of Ministers and Elders were to be the judges, then was John Wilbur a Friend of "*weight and consistency*," he having been furnished by them with a Certificate of *unity* as a *Gospel Minister*, on returning to America; and there does not appear any reason to doubt that he continues to sustain his wonted character for "*weight and consistency*;" excepting that *he* differs "from the Friend from England," on matters of doctrine, as would have *differed* our "*Early Friends*."

J. J. Gurney says, "In case of that Meeting not being satisfied with the explanation which I may be enabled to offer, of the passages thus submitted to their consideration, it is my full intention to modify them, strike them out, or even *publicly renounce them*, in whole or in part, as the meeting may think proper to *advise*." Had he such intention of "*publicly renouncing*, in whole or in part, as that meeting might think proper to *advise*?" When that meeting, some years since, disapproved of, and refused its sanction to, his "*Brief Remarks*," &c. did he either strike out any part of, or '*publicly renounce*,' the work? On the contrary it has since been circulated on both sides the Atlantic. And has he publicly stated or printed any disapprobation thereof? Perhaps he might have said that he had not intended their being thus circulated, or their ever coming to *light*, having had only a few copies printed for *private* circulation amongst his *particular* friends.—So much the worse. They were disapproved of by that body to whom he professed to submit, and yet in *opposition* to their opinion he circulated the "*Brief Remarks*" in private. Could they have been previously printed and handed thus about? If so, the case was no better. If done *previously* to the advice being given by the "Morning Meeting in London," why did not the author, in conformity therewith, take the earliest opportunity for "*publicly renouncing*" the work, and causing the stray copies to be returned, and their circulation suppressed? If not *printed till after* the advice was given, wherein lies the consistency of the *act* of the author and the plausible *declaration* he made? Joseph John Gurney persevered in *his own* opinions *contrary* to those of "the Morning Meeting in London," and of *our early* and honorable Friends, who were instrumental in gathering and in uniting the Society in a bond of love, and in that *spiritual* understanding of the Scriptures from which these "*Brief Remarks*" are calculated to draw away the attention, and to turn the mind from inward feeling to outward observation. But he claims an attainment over the last one hundred and fifty years, by his superior knowledge in Biblical criticism!

There is another point in his letter which elucidates this view of the subject, notwithstanding J. J. G.'s professed "spirit of submission and brotherly love;" for he says, "Nothing, I trust, would induce me to sacrifice one particle of the 'Truth as it is in Jesus,' to please or satisfy any man or body of men whatever." Thus he reserves to himself the option of declining to comply with any thing the "meeting may think proper to advise," unless it accord with his *own* opinions. Any mere professor of religion might safely make a similar declaration. It evinces little of Christian meekness and brotherly condescension; whilst the Society is deeply agitated with sentiments different from those of "our early Friends."

In the forepart of his letter J. J. Gurney says, "I should consider that I was travelling out of my record were I to *attempt* to answer the accusations made against me by [such] an individual, [J. W.] who," &c. "In fact I have never felt at liberty even to *look* into his book." How then does he know that it contains *any* accusations, and what those accusations are? A perfect anomaly,—to plead scruple of conscience to avoid knowing how he is accused; or whether he be accused at all! But to proceed,—"Having long had reason to believe that he was indulging in a wrong spirit, and having often witnessed the verification of the old proverb, 'whoso *toucheth pitch* shall be defiled thereby.'" Assertion is no proof. I cannot find any attempt made to prove that "he was indulging in a wrong spirit," except in differing in opinion from "the Friend from England;" and if every one who does so is to be stigmatised in the same manner, it may be hoped that J. Wilbur will have many honorable companions in his peculiar path of suffering for "righteousness' sake"!

Some time ago a pamphlet was got up entitled, "Calumny Refuted; or, a Glance at John Wilbur's Book." The leading title of this publication is a strange misnomer. It is no more calumnious for J. Wilbur to differ from J. J. Gurney, than it is for J. J. Gurney to differ from our "Early Friends." Nor does it appear there is any attempt to fix the calumny, except it be in what are called "Garbled Extracts," which, being so clearly refuted in the Reply, "Is it Calumny or is it Truth?" I need only observe that they are made much stronger by being lengthened or given in full. And this brother who presumes so to differ in sentiment from J. J. Gurney, as to be compared to "pitch," was a Minister, against whom no other charge is substantiated than his so differing. But even allowing J. Wilbur to have been an offender, how opposite was the line of conduct pursued towards him from the exhortation of the Apostle, "to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." The only point in J. Wilbur's book, to which any thing like calumny could be imputed, if it were *not* true, appears to be the reference to "*the buying Friends over*;" and this not being replied to, or denied in the work entitled "Calumny Refuted," gives reason to conclude that the statement is correct. Another passage deserves especial notice. J. J. G. says,—"I believe there is *nothing* in my writings at *variance* with the *Truth* as it has *always* been professed by *Friends!*" Does he not well know that he has promulgated views respecting "Justification and Sanctification," *different* from our "*early Friends*,"—on the "Resurrection of the body,"—on "*the middle state*," which, by a little stretch of fancy, may be supposed to come very near the Romish Purgatory. And on the "Interpretation of some texts of Scripture," &c. &c. a part of which is very like the Romish Transubstantiation! He says, for instance,—"These passages are numerous; and on a careful examination of them, it will be found that the *flesh* always means *His human body*, that body which was born, died and rose again,—and that his *blood* always means his *very blood*, which was his natural life, and which was *naturally* shed on the cross for the remission of sins." He thus sets up his own opin-

ions, to the disparagement of our "Early Friends," as if he had attained more of true "biblical knowledge" from the discoveries of critics and commentators, for the last one hundred and fifty years, (I think he may now say for nearly two centuries,) than they had by their obedience to "the Seed," or "Gift of God" in their own hearts. These "*variances*" from "the *Truth* as it has always been professed by Friends," are not seen by Friends *only*, but many others have seen and spoken of them; and some have written of them; especially Ralph Wardlaw, styled D. D., who, being a scholar, I conclude will not be considered of inferior authority; nor do I suppose that J. J. G. has felt himself restrained from "looking into his book." In his letter addressed to the Society of Friends, Ralph Wardlaw says:—

"I have given in copious extracts, the views of J. J. Gurney on the doctrine of justification. They are clear, simple, scriptural;—but, are they Quakerism? Let none be startled at the question; it is not a hasty one. I shall show you there is room for it. There are large portions of the writings of this highly intelligent and devoted Friend, in which we *entirely lose sight of the peculiarities of Quaker sentiments and Quaker phraseology*. He seems to lay aside his garb, or rather to divest the system of the costume in which, before, it had invariably appeared. But for the occurrence of here and there a word, or phrase, which, to those familiar with the language of the body, conveys, more than others might at all think of, we go through whole sections with unmingled pleasure; losing the Friend in the Christian,—almost forgetting even the *inward light*. I presume I speak according to truth, when I represent them as the first Quaker writings, at least of any eminence, professing this character. He seems *per se*, and (if I am not greatly mistaken,) with no inconsiderable portion of the more rigid Friends, who belong to the old school, *and hold by the ancient Fathers of Quakerism*, he has on this very account been losing cast." Page 195.

"The terms in which Mr. Gurney invariably speaks of the Holy Scriptures, and which it is my delight to see him using, are such as to convert those employed by him respecting the independent influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit into little more than words without meaning." Page 351.

"My judgment and feelings being in thorough accordance with those of Mr. Gurney, in all that he says of the paramount authority of the "Word of God," as contained in the volume of revelation, I cannot see how he can be in harmony with *himself*, 'till he has thrown aside *the remnant of Quaker doctrines* to which he *still tenaciously clings*. I mean this "*immediate revelation*," under the modified designation by which he has chosen to qualify and recommend it. I cannot but fancy to myself the surprise and indignation with which some of the old Fathers of Quakerism would be stirred, by the attempts to explain away to so great an extent their favorite dogmas, and to fritter down the meaning of their phraseology, 'till there is *hardly left a shred of distinction between them and the Christian world at large*." Page 358.

"It would be unseemly presumption in me, to dispute the accuracy of Mr. Gurney's statement respecting the views entertained by his own body; but really it is impossible to read the writings of the older Quakers, the fathers of the family, without being sensible that there is a *prodigious softening down* on the part of *this writer of their opinions and language*." Page 365.

"Mr. Gurney conceives that every true Quaker is prepared cordially to acknowledge that the Holy Scriptures, and they alone, are a divinely authorised record of all the doctrines which we are required to believe, and of all the moral principles that are to regulate our actions, not to mention the luminous declaration which they contain of our relative and particular duties."

"And indeed on this, and various other points, it cannot fail to strike the

most superficial reader what perfect DISCORDANCE there is *between the writings* of Mr. Gurney and *those of the "early Friends."* I am very far from wishing Mr. Gurney to take a single step out of Quakerism, in points where Quakerism is true. In other points, however, he has *already* taken *several*, and those, too, even *larger strides* than any that *now remain* for him to take. May the Divine Spirit be graciously pleased, by means of that complete revelation which he has given, to lead not him only, but you, my friends, and myself, and every fellow-christian, and fellow-man around us, into all Truth." Page 367.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

BEFORE closing these remarks, it seems desirable to notice the disingenuous manner in which J. J. Gurney has endeavored to evade the force of the testimony of our late esteemed Friend Thomas Shillitoe, taken down from his lips a few days before the solemn close, as if he was in a weak state of mind and had *afterwards* changed his opinion, which *was not* the case. There is conclusive evidence to show that he died strong in that faith in which he had lived. I do not find that his testimony has been invalidated, or attempted to be invalidated. It was *his* belief for years, as it is that of many other sound and experienced Friends in reference to J. J. G.,—"That Episcopal views were imbibed from his education, and still remain with him,"—and if, in this our day, as of old, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the mighty," should we, contrary to the Apostolic declaration, "despise prophecings?"

The communication of our late upright and highly valued Friend George Jones, is also slighted by J. J. Gurney;—"That if his interpretations [of Scripture] are to prevail, then the Society must change its ground, and become an inconsistent mixture of Quakerism and Episcopalianism." But we need not marvel at these things, when we find him also cavilling at the weighty communications of our worthy and honorable predecessor in the Truth, George Fox, before his close, who was unwearied in his "labors of love in the everlasting Gospel, for the turning and gathering many thousands from darkness to the *Light of Christ Jesus*, the foundation of *true Faith*." And who said "All is well! the *seed of God reigns over all*, and over death itself." "Though I am weak in body, yet the power of God is over all, and the *seed reigns over all disorderly spirits*."

These attempts to render abortive the dying testimonies of Friends, are not in accordance with the advice and practice of the Society, which has been to preserve them. They are introduced into the testimonies respecting Ministers, and the practice has been approved by the Society from its early days. They have been published in many parts and editions of the "Dying Sayings," now called "Piety Promoted;" than which a more valuable book scarcely exists in the Society; and well would it be if it were more generally read and appreciated. Would J. J. Gurney also repudiate "the last words of David?"—"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God," &c. Or those of James Naylor, uttered about two hours before his decease? Or those of Job Thomas, when about to enter the abode of the blessed?

As our Saviour advised to "gather up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost," it may be well to remind Friends, that within a few years it has, as a solemn warning, been proclaimed amongst us, that another trial awaited us more specious or refined, and more extensive in its results than that caused by the Beaconites. Though they, for a time, thought they

stood strong, yet, under the Divine anointing they were told that "they never would form a compact body, but would be scattered to the four winds of Heaven." How literally this has been fulfilled, "he that runs may read." And having witnessed the remarkable fulfillment of this part of the Divine communication, should we not give "the more diligent heed," and solemnly ponder what remains to be fulfilled, that "we shall be sifted as from sieve to sieve," but that "the precious seed will be preserved,"—"that the enemy is too wily to appear amongst us now as a roaring lion,"—"that he would be transformed as an angel of light," "even in the form of a *Bible Christian*?" &c. Is it not then wisdom, my dear friends, to attend to these solemn warnings, "lest that day come upon any at unawares," crying unto the Lord in humble prostration of soul,—“ Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach!”—"Give us help from trouble, O Lord! for vain is the help of man." Our Saviour said unto the Jews, "Ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth," and queried of them, "but can ye not discern this time?" or "the signs of the times?" Dear Friends, can ye not discern the signs of *these* times? are they not portentous? Then "to thy tents, O Jacob! and to thy *true* dwelling place, O Israel! lest thou be found a worshipper in the outward court!"

Will any be ready to say that these things should not be written, nor J. J. Gurney interfered with? If such there be, let them consider that it is *he* that has stirred up this controversy and brought himself into the situation in which he now stands, by coming before the public in the manner he has done. Every author, thus stepping forward, more especially those who arraign *ancient* and acknowledged *principles*, become as it were public property, and lay themselves open to the rejoinders of any who may think well, in defence of the Truth, to set the public right respecting *views* and *opinions* subversive of *ancient, true, and genuine Quakerism*, as set forth and practised by Fox, Barclay, Penn and others; the writings of J. J. G. not being "sufficiently purged from *Episcopalian* views."

Will it be said, that it would be better to allow these things to subside of themselves rather than revive them? Let it be remembered that this was the line recommended by former dissentients. Was it not so with the Hicksites, and also with the Beaconites? The poison was diffused, and they wanted to prevent the antidote from being taken. They did not wish their works to be brought "to the light;" and so it is still. Let the *new* doctrines work in secret; be quiet and don't disturb the Society; "let us not strive about words to no profit, for the present is a time in which we cannot afford to spend our strength in mutual jealousies, fears, and contentions, about notions and words," say they. This is all very just if properly applied; but surely it is those who promulgate what is not in accordance with the harmonious "testimonies of our early Friends," that stir up these things, as may be especially seen by reference to J. J. Gurney's "Brief Remarks," &c. on 2 Peter, i. 16—21; which interpretation of that important passage is well contrasted with the writings of George Fox, William Penn, Robert Barclay, George Whitehead, Francis Howgill, Samuel Fisher, James Parnell, and others in a Tract, No. 50, published a few years since, by John Harrison of Manchester; and also in the "Select Historical Memoirs," by William Hodgson, jun. Philadelphia, 1844, page 115. The following extract on this subject, from a late publication, may further serve to illustrate my remark.

"When George Fox interpreted this passage to the priest and people at Nottingham, he spoke by the Spirit of Prophecy; yet some of his degenerate followers now-a-days, under a profession of greater light, and of the great aid derived from Biblical Critics during the last two centuries, give a different interpretation; and consequently they do not speak by the same spirit as he did,

or they would speak the same thing, and it is because so many speak by their own spirits, that there is so much jangling and confusion. Truly it may be said of us, at this day, 'the leaders of the people are causing them to err, and too many of the people love to have it so.'"

I do not find that J. J. Gurney has attempted any clear refutation—"that there is a difference between *his* writing and those of our *early Friends*;" and have we not abundant confirmation of the charge?

Some years since he published "Strictures on 'The Truth Vindicated,'" in which he failed in his attempt to reconcile his and the views of the early Friends, as may appear by referring to a talented publication entitled—"Early Friends and Modern Professors,"—to "John Wilbur's book," and to "Is it calumny or is it Truth." And, although some attempt at reconciliation of sentiment is made in "Calumny Refuted," (and very awkward is the effort!) yet we cannot admit it, even as an apology on *his* part, as that pamphlet does not bear *his* name. It is not any labored or *ingenious* explanation that is necessary, but a *clear, decided and truthful renunciation of every thing in his works which does not accord with the principles of the Society* as laid down by those who gathered it, that can satisfy *Friends* and the *Public*, that he is in truth a Quaker, in *unity* with "our *early Friends*," according to the proposition of Robert Barclay, wherein he says "that there was no *true* knowledge of God, but that which is *revealed inwardly* by His Holy Spirit;" and with William Penn, "that this main distinguishing point or principle, viz.—'the *Light of Christ within*, as God's gift for man's salvation,' is, their *fundamental principle*, which is the corner stone of *their*, and consequently of *our* 'fabric.'"

"Fox preached this doctrine to a seeking age,
It shines in Barclay's unrefuted page."

POSTSCRIPT.

THE foregoing was in the hands of a printer at the time of Joseph John Gurney's decease, which, with other circumstances, occasioned some delay and reconsideration of the subject; but the writer being still urged by some of his friends to give publicity to his Notes, &c. he has continued willing to accede to their request, on reflecting that the controversy occasioned by these exceptionable doctrines has increasingly engaged the attention of some of the Yearly Meetings on the American continent; that it is likely to spread to them all; that this country is not likely to remain exempt; and that the time approaches when every individual member may have to decide on which side he stands;—whether in support of those pure, precious principles, professed, promulgated, and practised by "our early Friends," through an unreserved obedience to the internal teachings of the Spirit of Truth; or, in favoring the "new views, tending to lead the Society back into Episcopacy, soon to mingle with the nation as before,"—there being as much difference between the ancient and the new doctrines, "as between Calvinism and Arminianism."

The delay in the printing of the foregoing, has given opportunity to present the reader with the following extract, showing very clearly the opinion of those not in profession with Friends, on the controversy which has given rise to this publication.

EXTRACT

FROM THE

"CHRISTIAN EXAMINER," BOSTON, U. S. 7TH MONTH, 1847.

The Editor, after acknowledging the receipt of "The Epistolary Declaration," "An Address from Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting," "Narrative of Facts and Circumstances," "Calumny Refuted," and the pamphlet called "Considerations," says:—"The accumulation of these pamphlets, all of which have been sent us since the publication on the 'Schism in the Society of Friends,' in a late number of our journal, shows how strong an interest the subject has excited. The first and second of them we had read and used in writing that article. They contain a Narrative of the events that led to a separation of John Wilbur and his Friends from the old Yearly Meeting, and a justification of his conduct in reference to that matter. The third we had also consulted. It is published by authority of the Yearly Meeting, and defends its proceedings on the ground that 'doctrines were not at all in the question, but the support of Christian order and discipline.' We conceive that it is neither tenable nor right, to insist that a matter of discipline should take precedence of a *doctrinal difference that threatens to terminate the existence of the Society* as a separate organization. The fourth is a defence of Mr. Gurney, against the charge of departing from the doctrines and testimonies of the primitive Quakers."

"During the controversy between John Wilbur and the Yearly Meeting, the latter uniformly treated it as a matter of discipline and justified their proceedings against him on the ground that by bringing charges of unsound doctrines against an accredited Minister, he was violating the regulations established by the Society for such cases; whereas Mr. Wilbur insisted that this was a far more important question than one of discipline,—that Mr. Gurney taught doctrines inconsistent with those the Society had always maintained. The Meeting would never come to a public examination of Mr. Gurney's opinions, and a comparison of them with the standard authorities of their church. In the tract "Calumny Refuted," this comparison is instituted. After reading it carefully, we are constrained to say that the resemblance between *his* doctrines and those of the "early Friends," is rather verbal than real, and that the allegations of a *departure from the acknowledged standard of the Society are fully sustained.*"

"The last of the above documents is by far the most important to a correct understanding of this controversy, of any that have fallen under our notice. It is a view of the proceedings in the case of John Wilbur, written with a remarkable intelligence and candour. We think it must produce in the minds of impartial readers a conviction that John Wilbur's offence consisted in his strictures upon the doctrine advocated by Mr. Gurney, and his assertions and offers to prove that they contradicted the fundamental principles of Quakerism. We have no personal or denominational interest in this controversy. We stand as observers outside the parties concerned in it. And it seems to us very singular that while members of various religious denominations, widely differing in opinions from each other, can discover not only a difference between the doctrines of Mr. Gurney and those of the primitive Friends, but an *absolute discordance* between them, many of the Quaker's Society can see nothing but harmony; to our minds the difference is as distinctly marked as that between Calvinism and Arminianism."

THE END.

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CHAPTER

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